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ABSTRACT

The annual conference programs of the New England Educational Research Organization (NEERO) were examined from 1969 through 1988 to determine their content, the number of presenters, and their geographical locations as indicators of scholarly productivity. Two judges created categories for titles of papers and symposia. Merging the lists created 54 categories, several of which appeared only once or twice over the 20 years. Of a total of 1,849 presenters, only 16 attended 5 or more conferences. A large majority (1,502) participated in only one conference. Most of the presenters made presentations only once. Since all of the conference presenters are required to become members of the NEERO, the organization has a high member turnover rate. The conference may serve as a forum for graduate students and young faculty seeking to participate in a conference and to "try out" and refine their ideas and research before disseminating them to a national audience. Although 65% of the presenters were from New England, 37 states and three foreign countries were represented over the years. In the series of conferences, 211 institutions were represented, with 36 represented for 5 years or more. In spite of the rapid turnover rate, the NEERO has flourished. It may be that the small core of individuals who have been members for an extended period provide sufficient stability. Three tables and two figures illustrate the data analyzed. (SLD)

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A Retrospective Analysis of the Annual Conference of the New England Educational Research Organization: 1969-1988

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A Retrospective Analysis of the Annual Conference of the New England Educational Research Organization: 1969-1988

Considerable research has examined scholarly productivity in educational research. Smith and Caulley (1981) and Kroc (1984), in studies of one measure of scholarly productivity, analyzed the frequency that an author's work is cited by peers. Gordon et al (1984), in an analysis of the productivity and citation rates of AERA members, wrote that universities base faculty rewards partially on their scholarly work. But that "about one-fifth of the scholars may write about four-fifths of all articles.." (p. 15). Schubert (1979) examined institutional productivity by analyzing the annual conference programs of AERA from 1975 through 1979. He reasoned that these presentations represent research in early stages of development:

> These presentations often represent research that is at an initial point of closure, but in need of more refinement prior to publication. It is research that represents quality, based on the AERA Conference proposal refereeing process, as well as quality, expressed in numbers of contributors from different centers of research activity (1979, p.13).

The study decribed here examined the annual conference programs of the New England Educational Research Organization (NEERO) from 1969 through 1988. No previous research has been identified which has analyzed the annual programs of a regional research conference. The purpose of this study was to determine the content of each of the annual programs and to identify the number of presenters and their geographical locations as indicators of scholarly productivity.

Method

Copies of all of the programs for the annual conference of the New England Educational Research Organization (NEERO) from the years 1969 through 1988 were obtained. Tallies were made of the number of paper presenters (a paper presenter was defined as all of the individuals listed as a paper author) and symposia participants each year and of the geographical locations of each of these presenters.

In addition, an analysis of the topics of each of the papers and symposia was undertaken. Two judges independently created categories for the titles of each of the papers and symposia. When differences between the judges arose, they were resolved through discussion. After all of the titles of the papers and symposia were placed in categories, the titles and the categories in which they were placed were reviewed a second time. It was agreed that a minimum of 3 papers was needed in order to create a category.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows that the number of presenters each year from 1969 through 1988. Table 2 contains the number of repeat presenters. Of a total of 1,849 presenters, only 16 have attended 5 or more conferences. The overwhelming majority of presenters (1,502) have participated in only one conference. Most of the presenters were one-time presenters.

It is evident that there is a high turnover among conference participants. Since all conference presenters are required to become members of NEERO for the year in which they present a paper, there is a high turnover rate among NEERO membership. It is unclear why these individuals chose to participate in the annual conference only once, but it can be speculated that the conference provides an opportunity for graduate students and young faculty to "try out" and refine their ideas and research before disseminating it to a national audience. In addition, many faculty who are seeking promotion and tenure must demonstrate that they have participated in a conference, in which the papers have been refereed. The NEERO conference may be perceived as a forum for this type of activity.

The evidence also seems to support Gordon et al.'s (1984) suggestion that the emphasis on scholarly work by institutions of higher education may drive the content of the research conferences and the types of presenters. In addition, support is also offered for Schubert's contention (1979) that annual conferences are an opportunity to present research that is in an early stage or that needs refinement.

Regarding the geographical locations of the presenters, a total of 37 U.S. states and territories and 3 foreign countries were represented (see figure 2). The majority of the presenters (65%) were from the 6 New England states. Since this is a regional organization based in New England, this was expected. It was surprising, however, to see the large number of states that were represented as well as the several foreign foreign countries.

The categories in which the papers were placed were equally diverse (see figure 1). A total of 54 categories were created. Several categories appeared only once or twice during the 19 years. This may have occurred because the topics were "hot" during the year they were presented or that because the participants represented such a diverse group and their research represented their different, and sometimes unique, interests.

Two hundred and eleven (211) different institutions of higher education were represented during the years 1969-1988. Those institutions that were represented for 5 or more years are listed in Table 3. It is difficult to draw conclusions about the productivity of institutions just from analyzing these data. However, it is evident that the faculty from these institutions have shown a commitment to NEERO.

Schubert (1979) suggested several areas of related research that could be pursued. An examination of how much of the research that is presented at NEERO annual conferences, that is eventually disseminated through national conference and published, scholarly work, could be undertaken. Studies of the political, economic and organizational variables that affect research productivity could also be helpful.

Consideration certainly must be given to the stability and to the growth and development of NEERO as a professional research organization. The membership of NEERO fluctuates because of the high turnover rate among the participants. Because the membership turns over so rapidly, the institutions of the members, the geographical locations, and the research interests of the members also change from year to year. But, why has NEERO continued to flourish in spite of this high turnover? It may be that the small core of individuals who have been members for an extended period of time provide sufficient stability for the organization to continue. In light of this, it may be worthwhile to explore the characteristics of this small, committed group of individuals.

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Table 1

Number of Presenters Each Year 1969 - 1988

Year	# of Presenters
1. 1969	1. 103
2. 1970	2. 88
3. 1971	3. 77
4. 1972	4. 75
5. 1973	5. 53
6. 1974	6. 47
7. 1975	7. 119
8. 1976	8. 194
9. 1977	9. 110
10. 1978	10. 114
11. 1979	11. 57
12. 1980	12. 118
13. 1981	13. 147
14. 1982	14. 193
15. 1983	15. 160
16. 1984	16. 177
17. 1985	17. 191
18. 1986	18. 173
19. 1987	19. 158
20. 1988	20. 190

Table 2

Number of Repeat Presenters 1969 - 1988*

# of Years	# of Repeat Presenters
2 years	214
3 years	66
4 years	30
5 years	16
6 years	6
7 years	7
8 years	5
9 years	2
10 years	0
11 years	1
Total	347

* There were 1,502 one-time presenters

Table 3

Institutions of Higher Education That Were Represented for 5 or More Years

1969-1988.

Boston College
Columbia University
Cornell University
Emerson College
Fordham University
Harvard University
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Johnson State College
Keene State College
Long Island University
National Technical Institute for the Deaf
Northeastern University
Penn State
Rhode Island College
Salem State College
Southern Connecticut State College
State University of New York at Abany
State University of New York at Brockport
State University of New York at Buffalo
State University of New York at Cortland
State University of New York at Oneonta
Syracuse University
University of Bridgeport
University of Connecticut
University of Hartford
University of Lowell
University of Massachusetts
University of Maine
University of New Hampshire
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rhode Island
University of Rochester
University of Southern Maine
University of Vermont
Virginia Polytechnical University
Westfield State College

Figure 1

Conference Papers Categorized by Topics 1969 - 1988

	ASSESSMENT	SPEC. POP.	TEACHER TR.	SEC. ED.	HIGHER ED.	CONDUCT. RES.	FAC.	CUR./INSTRUC.	READ/WR/LANG	ED. LEAD.	EVALUATION	GROWTH & DEV	COMPUTERS	ATTITUDES	POLICY	STAFF DEV.	TEACH. BEH.	COUNSELING	SCH. CLIMATE	MISC.	PARTNERSHIP	CERTIFICATION	COGNITION	HEALTH	TECHNOLOGY	SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE	PHILOSOPHY	SCHOOL ORGANIZATION	COMPETENCY	PROGRAM APPROVAL	ED. IN OTHER COUNTRIES	AFFECTIVE	SELF CONCEPT	RURAL	CAREER DEVELOPMENT	SUICIDE	FUNDING	STUDENT BEHAVIOR	ACCOUNTABILITY	ACHIEVEMENT	NEERO	COOPERATIVE PLANNING	HISTORY	BOSTON	DRUGS	COMMUNITY	STATE, FED. & LOCAL	SEX DIFFERENCES	LAW ENFORCEMENT	RES. ON WOMEN	CAREERS	ELEMENTARY EDUCATION	VISUAL PERCEPTION	NURSING		TOTAL
1969	4	4			2	13		12	14		10	4	5	2			3	5		14			1					6										2	2		2		3	3	3												106
1970	15	7	3	4	5	2		3	1		3	5	5		1	1				15			3				4	2							3	4																				83
1971	8	9			3			7	2	1	2	3					3			3			2													2	1																			57
1972	7	8		3				15	4		2	2	2	2				5		4																		1																		65
1973	2			2	3	4		1	2		3	6	1							4		1		6																															40
1974	2			2	4	2			2		3	2		2				1	2	3				3																															30
1975	16	12		1	3	2		11	10		10		1	5	1		3			11				3																															93
1976	23	12	3	5	6	5		7	8	1	16	3	1	8			2	5		10	1		4	7									9																				136
1977	12	2	1		7	5		4	4	2	7		1	4	5		1		3			1		5																													70
1978	22	4			6	1		2	2		9				1		3	4		3																																	60
1979	12	7	2		1	2					9				1		2			1													2																			39
1980	16	10			5	4		10	6		11	4						3		10			4					2								5																90
1981	14	9	2	1	3	4		7	3		16	3			2	1	1	1	3	2			5										4				2	3		1													97
1982	13	19	5	1	13	6		17	3	2	11	3			5	1			1	10					2								7										2										121
1983	15	9		3	4	10		7	5	2	2	8	4	2		3				4			6		2			2							3	7																98
1984	10	5			9	7	2	13	5	2	7	2	1	6	2	1	2			7							5		1				3	2	3	3	2															100
1985	15	14	5	5	10	4	8	16	14		6	5	11	5	1	2			3	10			6							5																							145
1986	8	7	5	2	9	11	7	14	8	3	11	5	4	7	9				3	5	7	5	4	3					1	2	1																					141
1987	15	13	8	4	9	4	2	9	10	2	4	4	6	2	4	2				6	11	1	4	4	2	2																											128
1988	13	10	4	2	9	6	7	14	9	11	3	1	4	2	4	1					13	1	2				4	3	3																									126
	242	161	38	35	111	92	26	160	112	38	145	80	48	55	30	13	21	23	23	142	8	12	38	28	10	8	7	14	2	1	5	3	24	3	3	2	5	18	6	5	2	3	3	3	5	3	7	3	3	6	2	4	6	4		1825

Figure 2

Geographical Locations of Presenters 1969 - 1988

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	Total
Alabama												1									1
Arizona																			1		1
Brazil														1							1
British Columbia																	1				1
California											2										2
Canada		1				2			1	1		2			1	1		1	1	1	11
Colorado																				1	1
Connecticut	20	13	21	18	9	11	11	23	4	3	1	9	6	6	15	8	17	12	7	16	230
Delaware							1						1								5
Florida												1									1
Georgia							2						1	1							6
Illinois	2	1	5	4	5	1	1		1	1		1	3	5	1		4	4	1	5	45
Indiana			2				1			2											5
Idaho															1						1
Iowa								1	1		1		2								5
Ireland							1														1
Kansas														2					1		3
Louisiana												5						2			7
Maine	6	1	1			1	1	7	1	8	4	10	4	12	27	35	33	25	28	41	245
Maryland									1				1								2
Massachusetts	53	56	42	23	20	4	53	82	49	36	10	27	33	31	26	24	40	33	29	52	723
Michigan							1					1	2	2	1						7
Missouri														1				1			2
New Hampshire	3	2	2	1		1		1	3	1	5	3	3	1	3	11	6	9	7	5	67
New Jersey			1			1	1	2	2	4	2	3	2	3	2		3	2		1	29
New York	3	3	4	2	1		20	38	28	33	12	14	53	51	37	48	43	46	29	24	489
North Carolina							1					1									2
Ohio			1					1				2			1			3		3	11
Oregon												1									1
Pennsylvania			2				4	1		2	3	4	5	2	7	2	10	4	10	10	66
Puerto Rico																		1			1
Rhode Island	8	3	1	5	1	4	2	10	7	8	10	8	3	16	9	12	21	9	9	5	151
South Dakota								1													1
Tenessee												7		1					1		9
Texas												1			1				2		4
Virgin Islands															1						1
Virginia	1											8	5	1	9	2	1				27
Vermont	1		2	3			1	3	2			1	1	4	3	3	5	4	9	15	57
Washington D.C.							3	2	1						1						7
Wisconsin														1							1
Miscellaneous	5	3	4				6	4	3	2		4	7	1	3		2	1	2		48
Total	103	83	88	56	36	23	112	176	104	101	50	114	132	142	149	146	186	159	137	182	